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*President Obama is ordering the deployment of seventeen thousand extra troops to Afghanistan. In a statement he said they were needed to stabilise a deteriorating situation. From Washington, our North America editor Justin Webb reports:*

This is the first big military decision from **the new White House team**. In a written statement, Mr Obama said Afghanistan had not received the **strategic** attention, direction and resources it urgently required.

Speaking on **Air Force One**, the president's spokesman Robert Gibbs suggested that the extra troops were **sorely needed** in order to address an immediate crisis **combating a deteriorating situation** ahead of a Taliban **spring offensive**.

In the longer term though it's not yet clear what the president intends to do about Afghanistan. In advance of a visit to Canada he told a Canadian TV interviewer that he thought the war was still **winnable**, al-Qaeda could still be **stamped out**. On the other hand he said the spread of extremism could not be stopped **solely through military means**, diplomacy and development were also important.

He may well add to the seventeen thousand troop **reinforcements**, his commanders would like more, but the president has yet to decide on a long-term plan.

Justin Webb, BBC News, Washington

## Vocabulary and definitions

<b>the new White House team</b>	the people working for President Obama
<b>strategic</b>	well planned in advance for a particular purpose
<b>Air Force One</b>	the US President's private aircraft (sometimes referred to as 'the flying White House')
<b>sorely needed</b>	absolutely necessary
<b>combating a deteriorating situation</b>	trying to prevent a bad situation from getting even worse
<b>spring offensive</b>	a military attack taking place in the spring
<b>winnable</b>	with the possibility of being victorious
<b>stamped out</b>	destroyed
<b>solely through military means</b>	using only the armed forces
<b>reinforcements</b>	soldiers sent to make the army stronger

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